CHAPTER 7
TACTICAL ENABLING OPERATIONS

Tactical enabling operations are specialized missions planned and conducted to achieve or sustain a tactical advantage and executed as part of an offensive, defensive, stability, or support operation. At the platoon level, these include reconnaissance, retrograde (withdrawal and delay), special purpose operations (linkup, stay-behind, relief in place, and passage of lines), and security. The BFV infantry platoon and rifle squads typically conduct these operations as part of a larger force.

7-1. RECONNAISSANCE

Reconnaissance is any mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or potential enemy, or to secure data concerning the physical characteristics of a particular area. Successful reconnaissance is a focused effort aimed at gathering timely, accurate information about the enemy and the terrain in the area of operations. It is the responsibility of every leader to conduct reconnaissance to gain the information he needs to ensure the success of his mission. In addition, the platoon may conduct other reconnaissance operations to gather information as part of a higher headquarters' intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations. (For a more detailed discussion of reconnaissance or ISR operations, refer to FM 7-92, FM 17-95, or FM 3-90.)

a. **Reconnaissance Planning.** Before an operation, the company commander determines what he must know about the enemy. He must first request the information needed from the next higher headquarters. If they cannot provide or gather the information needed, they will authorize the commander to send a reconnaissance element forward (METT-TC dependent). As an example of identifying information requirements before an operation, the company team commander determines he must find out if an enemy force is controlling a choke point through which the team must move during the next day's attack. The commander may decide to send a platoon's rifle squads to reconnoiter the choke point the night before the attack. Once the operation is under way, the commander continues to identify information requirements. An example is the need to find an assailable flank or other position of advantage over an identified enemy force while the company team develops the situation. In such a situation, the commander may dispatch a platoon or section to find a flank or position from which the team can effectively engage the enemy.

b. **Reconnaissance Execution.** Reconnaissance can be passive or active. Passive reconnaissance includes such techniques as map and photographic reconnaissance and surveillance. Active methods include mounted and dismounted ground reconnaissance and reconnaissance by fire. Active reconnaissance operations are also classified as aggressive or stealthy.

(1) Aggressive reconnaissance is characterized by the speed and manner in which the reconnaissance element develops the situation once contact is made with an enemy force.

A unit conducting aggressive reconnaissance uses both direct and indirect fires and movement to develop the situation. It uses primarily mounted reconnaissance and reconnaissance by fire. In conducting a mounted patrol, the unit employs the principles of tactical movement to maintain security. The patrolling element uses cover and concealment and conducts bounding overwatch as necessary to avoid detection. (For a more detailed discussion of tactical movement, refer to Chapter 3 of this manual.)

(2) Stealthy reconnaissance emphasizes techniques and procedures that allow the unit to avoid detection and engagement by the enemy. It is more time-consuming than aggressive reconnaissance. To be effective, stealthy reconnaissance relies primarily on rifle squads making maximum use of covered and concealed terrain. The company team's primary assets for stealthy reconnaissance are its infantry squads.

c. **Reconnaissance Before and After Operations.** To be most effective, reconnaissance must be conducted continuously before, during, and after operations. Before an operation, the company team focuses its reconnaissance effort on filling gaps in its information about the enemy and the terrain. After an operation, the team conducts reconnaissance to maintain contact with the enemy and collect information for upcoming operations. Situations in which the platoon may conduct reconnaissance before or after an operation include the following:

- Reconnaissance by a quartering party of an assembly area and the associated route to it.
- Reconnaissance by platoons from the assembly area to and in the vicinity of the LD before an offensive operation.
- Reconnaissance by rifle squads to probe enemy positions for gaps open to an attack or infiltration.
- Reconnaissance by rifle squads to observe forward positions and guide mounted elements to key positions on the battlefield.
- Reconnaissance by rifle squads (normally with engineers) to locate bypasses around obstacle belts or to determine the best locations and methods for breaching operations.
- Reconnaissance by rifle squads of chokepoints or other danger areas in advance of the remainder of the company team.
- Reconnaissance by mounted patrols to observe forward positions or to clear a route to a forward position.
- Reconnaissance by platoons of defensive positions or engagement areas for conducting the defense.
- Reconnaissance by mounted or dismounted rifle squads as part of security operations to secure friendly obstacles, clear possible enemy OPs, or cover areas not observable by stationary OPs.
- Reconnaissance by sections or rifle squads to maintain contact with adjacent units.
- Reconnaissance by sections or dismounted rifle squads to maintain contact with enemy elements.

d. **Reconnaissance During Operations.** During offensive operations, platoon reconnaissance normally focuses on fighting for information about the enemy and the terrain, with the primary goal of gaining an advantage over the enemy. The platoon conducts this type of reconnaissance during actions on contact. As the platoon develops

the situation, the platoon leader may dispatch mounted or dismounted patrols to identify positions of advantage or to acquire an enemy force. The information gained by the platoon in contact is critical to the success of its own mission and to the success of its higher headquarters.

e. **Forms of Reconnaissance**. In addition to reconnaissance performed as part of another type operation, there are four forms of reconnaissance conducted as distinct operations: route reconnaissance, zone reconnaissance, area reconnaissance, and reconnaissance in force. Although not optimally organized for reconnaissance, the company team can direct a BFV-equipped platoon to conduct route, zone, or area reconnaissance. (Reconnaissance in force is a limited-objective operation conducted by battalion-size and larger forces.)

The platoon may conduct a reconnaissance operation during preparation for another operation of its own (for example, performing zone reconnaissance before initiating a stationary guard operation), or it can conduct the reconnaissance to gain information for a higher headquarters.

In conducting a route, zone, or area reconnaissance, the platoon employs a combination of mounted and dismounted elements and reconnaissance by direct and indirect fires. Based on his evaluation of the factors of METT-TC, the commander establishes the role of assigned elements and support assets in his scheme of maneuver. Mechanized infantry platoons normally perform the reconnaissance role, taking advantage of their ability to use rifle squads to gather information on the ground.

In planning for route, zone, or area reconnaissance, the platoon leader receives the focus of the mission from the commander. The commander identifies whether the reconnaissance will be oriented on the terrain or on the enemy force. In a force-oriented reconnaissance operation, the critical task will be to find the enemy and to gather information about him. Terrain considerations of the route, zone, or area are only a secondary concern. The platoon generally is able to move more quickly in force-oriented reconnaissance than in terrain-oriented reconnaissance. The following paragraphs examine the specifics of route, zone, and area reconnaissance.

(1) ***Route Reconnaissance***. A route reconnaissance is a directed effort to obtain detailed information on a specific route as well as on all terrain from which the enemy could influence movement along that route. Route reconnaissance may be oriented on a specific area of movement, such as a road or trail, or on a more general area, such as an axis of advance. It is normally assigned when a commander wants to use the route in question. Although METT-TC and the commander's intent will dictate what actions the platoon takes, the following tasks are normally considered critical components of a reconnaissance:

- Determine the trafficability of the route.
- Reconnoiter all built-up areas. Locate a bypass around built-up areas.
- Reconnoiter all terrain the enemy can use to dominate movement along the route.
- Reconnoiter all lateral routes (within capability).
- Inspect and evaluate all bridges (within capability).
- Locate fords and crossing sites near all bridges.
- Locate a bypass around contaminated areas.

- Reconnoiter all defiles. This task includes clearing defiles of enemy forces and obstacles (within capability) or locating bypasses.
- Locate and clear mines, obstacles, and barriers (within capability). Locate a bypass around obstacles.
- Find and report all enemy elements that can influence movement along the route.
- Report all reconnaissance information.

(2) ***Zone Reconnaissance***. A zone reconnaissance is a directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning all routes, terrain, enemy forces, and obstacles (including areas of contamination) within a zone defined by specific boundaries. The zone reconnaissance is normally conducted when the enemy situation is vague or when information concerning cross-country trafficability is required. As in route reconnaissance, the commander's intent and the factors of METT-TC will dictate the platoon's actions. The following tasks are normally considered critical components:

- Find and report all enemy forces in zone.
- Reconnoiter specific terrain in zone.
- Report all reconnaissance information.

If time permits, the commander may also direct the platoon to accomplish the following route reconnaissance tasks as part of a zone reconnaissance:

- Reconnoiter all terrain within the zone.
- Inspect and classify all bridges, overpasses, underpasses, and culverts (within capability).
- Locate fords or crossing sites near all bridges.
- Locate and clear all mines, obstacles, and barriers (within capability).
- Locate bypasses around built-up areas, obstacles, and contaminated areas.

(3) ***Area Reconnaissance.*** Area reconnaissance is a specialized form of zone reconnaissance. It is a directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning the terrain or enemy activity within a prescribed area. The area can be any location critical to the unit's operations. Examples include easily identifiable areas covering a fairly large space (such as towns or military installations), terrain features (such as ridge lines, wood lines, choke points), or a single point (such as a bridge or a building). The critical tasks of the area reconnaissance are the same as those associated with zone reconnaissance.

7-2. LINKUP OPERATIONS

Linkup entails the meeting of friendly ground forces (or their leaders or designated representatives). It may occur in, but is not limited to, the following situations:

- Advancing forces reaching an objective area previously secured by air assault, airborne, or infiltrating forces.
- Units conducting coordination for a relief in place.
- Cross-attached units moving to join their new organization.
- Advancing forces during follow and support mission.
- A unit moving to assist an encircled force.
- Units converging on the same objective during the attack.
- Units conducting a passage of lines.
- Units conducting reconnaissance forward of the main body.

a. **Steps of the Linkup Operation.** The platoon conducts linkup operations independently or as part of a larger force. The platoon may lead the linkup force. The linkup consists of three steps:

(1) ***Far Recognition Signal***. The units or elements involved in the linkup establish communications before they reach direct fire range. The lead element of each linkup force monitors the radio frequency of the other friendly force. FBCB2-equipped units may also achieve far recognition through displayed icons and digital messages.

(2) ***Coordination***. Before initiating movement to the linkup point, the forces must coordinate necessary tactical information including the following:

- The known enemy situation.
- Type and number of friendly vehicles.
- Disposition of stationary forces (if either unit is stationary).
- Routes to the linkup point and rally point (if used).
- Fire control measures.
- Near recognition signal(s).
- Communications information.
- CS coverage.
- CSS responsibilities and procedures.
- Finalized location of the linkup point and rally point (if used).
- Special coordination requirements such as maneuver instructions or requests for medical support.
- Visual linkup signals or alternate locations for linkup due to contact.

(3) ***Movement to the Linkup Point and Linkup.*** All units or elements involved in the linkup must enforce strict fire control measures to help prevent fratricide. Linkup points and restrictive fire lines must be recognizable by moving and or converging forces. Linkup elements take these actions:

- Conduct far recognition using FM radio (and digital, if FBCB2-equipped).
- Conduct short-range (near) recognition using the designated signal.
- Complete movement to the linkup point.
- Establish local security at the linkup point.
- Conduct additional coordination and linkup activities as necessary.

b. **Planning Considerations.** When planning a linkup, the platoon leader follows standard troop-leading procedures.

(1) The BFV's equipment (ISU or IBAS) allows for an improved operational picture between elements conducting the linkup operation to aid in navigation and to prevent fratricide. As the moving force closes on the linkup site, the stationary force is aware of its location thus reducing the possibility of fratricide. The moving unit does the same to reduce fratricide potential.

(2) Once the moving unit arrives close to the linkup location, the stationary unit should challenge it. For example, the stationary unit can give the moving unit a series of flashes using an infrared source during limited visibility. The moving force responds with a pre-coordinated number of flashes.

(3) The challenge and password may also be accomplished with audible sounds or digitally (if FBCB2-equipped).

(4) Infrared and thermal equipment enhances linkups conducted during limited visibility. Infrared lights aid in the linkup and as recognition signals. For example, the unit manning the linkup point can string infrared lights high in a tree or on a piece of distinguishable terrain to help guide the moving unit to the linkup site. This is particularly advantageous when the moving unit has difficulty finding the linkup site due to bad weather or restrictive terrain. Both units must know the capabilities of the enemy, and they must exercise caution when using infrared devices against an enemy with night vision capability.

7-3. PASSAGE OF LINES

A passage of lines entails movement of one or more units through another unit. This operation becomes necessary when the moving unit(s) cannot bypass the stationary unit and must pass through it. The primary purpose of the passage is to maintain the momentum of the moving elements. A passage of lines may be designated as either forward or rearward.

The controlling company team is responsible for planning and coordination of a passage of lines involving the platoon. In some situations, as when the platoon is using multiple passage routes (such as a separate route for each squad or section), the platoon leader must take responsibility for planning and coordinating each phase of the operation.

a. **Planning Considerations.** In planning a passage of lines, the platoon leader, must consider the tactical factors and procedures.

(1) The passage should facilitate transition to follow-on missions through the use of multiple lanes or lanes wide enough to support doctrinal formations for the passing units.

(2) Deception techniques, such as the use of smoke, may be employed to enhance security during the passage.

(3) The controlling commander must clearly define the battle hand over criteria and procedures used during the passage. His order should cover the roles of both the passing unit and the stationary unit and the use of direct and indirect fires. If necessary, he also specifies the location of the battle hand-over line (BHL) as part of the unit's graphic control measures. For a forward passage, the BHL is normally the LD for the passing force. In a rearward passage, it is normally a location in direct fire range of the stationary force. In general, a defensive hand over is complete when the passing unit is clear and the stationary unit is ready to engage the enemy. Offensive hand over is complete when the passing unit has deployed and crossed the BHL.

(4) The passing and stationary units coordinate obstacle information including the locations of enemy and friendly obstacles, existing lanes and or bypasses, and guides for the passage.

(5) Air defense coverage is imperative during the high-risk passage operation. Normally, the stationary unit will be responsible for providing air defense thus allowing the passing unit's air defense assets to move with it.

(6) Responsibility for CSS actions such as vehicle recovery or casualty evacuation in the passage lane must be clearly defined for both passing and stationary units.

(7) To enhance command and control during the passage, the platoon will collocate a command and control element, normally the platoon leader or platoon sergeant, with a similar element from the stationary or moving unit.

b. **Reconnaissance and Coordination.** Detailed reconnaissance and coordination are critical in a passage of lines, both in dealing with the planning factors outlined previously and in ensuring the passage is conducted quickly and smoothly. The platoon leader normally conducts all necessary reconnaissance and coordination for the passage. At times, he may designate the platoon sergeant or squad leader to conduct liaison duties for reconnaissance and coordination. The following items of information are coordinated (an asterisk(*) indicates items that should be confirmed by reconnaissance):

- Unit designation and composition; type and number of passing vehicles.
- Passing unit arrival time(s).
- Location of attack positions or assembly areas. *
- Current enemy situation.
- Stationary unit's mission and plan (to include OP, patrol, and obstacle locations).
- Location of movement routes, contact points, passage points, and passage lanes. (The use of GPS [or POSNAV] waypoints may simplify this process and speed the passage.)
- Guide requirements.
- Order of march.
- Anticipated actions on enemy contact.
- Requirements for supporting direct and indirect fires, including the location of the RFL. *
- NBC conditions.
- Available CS and CSS assets and their locations. *
- Communications information (to include frequencies, digital data, and near and far recognition signals).
- Criteria for battle hand over and location of the BHL.
- Additional procedures for the passage.

c. **Forward Passage of Lines.** In a forward passage, the passing unit first moves to an assembly area or an attack position behind the stationary unit.

(1) Designated liaison personnel move forward to link up with guides and confirm coordination information with the stationary unit. Guides lead the passing elements through the passage lane.

(2) The platoon conducts a forward passage by employing tactical movement. It moves quickly, uses appropriate dispersal and formations whenever possible, and keeps radio traffic to a minimum. It bypasses disabled vehicles as necessary.

(3) The platoon holds its fire until it passes the BHL or designated fire control measure unless the commander has coordinated fire control with the stationary unit.

(4) Once clear of passage lane restrictions, the unit consolidates at a rally point or attack position and conducts tactical movement in accordance with its orders.

d. **Rearward Passage of Lines**. Because of the increased risk of fratricide during a rearward passage, coordination of recognition signals and fire restrictions is critical.

(1) The passing unit contacts the stationary unit while it is still beyond direct fire range and conducts coordination as discussed previously. Near recognition signals and location of the BHL are emphasized. Additional fire control measures, such as RFLs, may be employed to further minimize the risk of fratricide.

(2) Following coordination, the passing unit continues tactical movement toward the passage lane. Gun tubes are oriented on the enemy, and the passing unit is responsible for its security until it passes the BHL. If the stationary unit provides guides, the passing unit may conduct a short halt to link up and coordinate with them.

(3) The passing unit moves quickly through the passage lane to a designated location behind the stationary unit.

7-4. RELIEF IN PLACE

A relief in place occurs when one unit replaces another unit during offensive or defensive operations in order to preserve the combat effectiveness of committed units. Whenever possible, conduct the relief at night or under other limited visibility conditions. In a relief involving the platoon, the company team commander directs when and how the operation will be conducted.

a. **Planning Considerations.** In planning a relief in place, the platoon leader—

- Issues a fragmentary order (FRAGO).
- Uses an advance party composed of key leaders to conduct detailed reconnaissance and coordination.
- As the relieving unit, adopts the outgoing unit's normal pattern of activity as much as possible.
- As the relieving unit, determines when the platoon will assume responsibility for the outgoing unit's position.
- As the relieving unit, collocates platoon headquarters with the relieved unit's headquarters.
- Maximizes operations security (OPSEC) to prevent the enemy from detecting the relief operation.
- Plans to transfer excess ammunition; wire; petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL); and other material of tactical value to the incoming unit.
- Controls movement by reconnoitering, designating and marking routes, and providing guides.

b. **Coordination.** The incoming and outgoing leaders must meet to exchange tactical information, conduct a joint reconnaissance of the area, and complete other required coordination for the relief. The two leaders must address passage of command and jointly develop contingency actions for enemy contact during the relief. The relief will be conducted on the communications nets of the outgoing unit. This process will normally include coordination of:

- Location of vehicle and individual fighting positions (to include hide, alternate, and supplementary positions).
- Enemy situation.
- The outgoing unit's tactical plan, to include graphics, platoon and squad fire plans, and individual vehicles' sector sketches.
- Fire support, including indirect fire plans and the time of relief for supporting artillery and mortar units.
- Types of weapon systems being replaced.
- Time, sequence, and method of relief.
- Location and disposition of obstacles and the time responsibility will be transferred.

- Supplies and equipment to be transferred.
- Movement control, route priority, and placement of guides.
- Command and signal information
- Maintenance, logistical support, and evacuation if necessary for disabled vehicles.
- Limited visibility considerations.

(1) Since a relief in place is often conducted during hours of limited visibility, the use of infrared or thermal equipment may speed the operation. Units follow prescribed SOPs to mark positions and routes with infrared lights to facilitate the occupation of or withdrawal from the position. These marking signals should be incorporated into the platoon leader's SOP.

(2) During the exchange of positions, the departing unit hands over any vehicle or individual position range cards to the relief element.

NOTE: During the coordination between M2A3-equipped units (or units equipped with FBCB2), graphics are exchanged digitally to reduce time and increase accuracy. Sector sketches are also exchanged between units. Transferring digital information does not relieve the leader of physically coordinating between units. These units also use the commander's tactical display (CTD) and precision navigation system to move to and away from the position as explained in linkup operations discussed previously.

c. **Conducting the Relief.** The outgoing leader retains responsibility for the area of operations and the mission. He exercises operational control over all subordinate elements of the incoming unit while they complete their portion of the relief. Responsibility passes to the incoming commander when all elements of the outgoing unit are relieved and adequate communications are established. The two relief methods are sequential (elements relieved one at a time) and simultaneous (elements relieved all at once). Relief of individual elements can be conducted in one of two ways:

- By alternate element position. The relieving element occupies a position separate from the relieved element.
- By alternate vehicle and or individual position. The relieving element occupies vehicle or individual fighting positions in the same battle position as the relieved element.

(1) ***Sequential Relief***. This is the most time-consuming method. The relieving unit moves to an assembly area to the rear of the unit to be relieved. Subordinate elements are relieved one at a time. This can occur in any order, with the relief generally following this sequence:

- The outgoing and incoming units collocate their headquarters and trains elements to facilitate command and control and the transfer of equipment, ammunition, fuel, water, and medical supplies.
- The first element being relieved (such as a squad) moves to its alternate fighting position or battle position while the relieving element moves into the outgoing element's primary positions. The incoming element occupies individual fighting positions.

- Incoming and outgoing elements complete the transfer of equipment and supplies.
- The relieved element moves to the designated assembly area behind the position.
- Once each outgoing element clears the release point (RP) en route to its assembly area, the next relieving element moves forward.

(2) ***Simultaneous Relief.*** This is the fastest, but least secure, method. All outgoing elements are relieved at once, with the incoming unit normally occupying existing positions, including battle positions and vehicle and individual fighting positions. The relief takes place in this general sequence:

- Outgoing elements move to their alternate battle positions and or vehicle and individual positions.
- Incoming elements move along designated routes to the outgoing elements' primary positions.
- Units complete the transfer of equipment and supplies.
- Relieved elements move to the designated unit assembly area

7-5. AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS

Through the conduct of combat operations, Bradley infantry platoons may be required to participate in air assault operations as part of the tactical plan. Successful air assault execution is based on a careful analysis of the factors of METT-TC and detailed, precise reverse planning. Basic plans comprising reverse planning and developed for each air assault operation are the ground tactical plan, the landing plan, the air movement plan, the loading plan, and the staging plan. These plans normally are coordinated and developed by the air assault task force (AATF) staff to make the best use of available time. If time is limited, planning steps may be compressed or conducted concurrently; detailed plans and orders may be SOPs or lessons learned in training. Battalion is the lowest level with sufficient personnel to plan, coordinate, and control an air assault operation. When company-size or lower operations are conducted, the bulk of the planning takes place at battalion or higher headquarters. Bradley platoon leaders use FM 90-4 for more detailed information regarding air assault operations. Although it is not the highest priority training in the mechanized infantry battalion, air assault operations and mission tasks should be included in platoon training. To ensure that an air assault is executed in an effective and efficient manner, the platoon leader and platoon sergeant have specific responsibilities they must perform. These responsibilities are outlined in the platoon SOP (IAW FM 90-4).

a. **Ground Tactical Plan.** The foundation of a successful air assault operation is the commander‘s ground tactical plan, around which subsequent planning is based. The ground tactical plan specifies actions in the objective area to accomplish the mission and address subsequent operations. The ground tactical plan contains essentially the same elements as any other infantry attack but capitalizes on speed and mobility to achieve surprise.

b. **Landing Plan.** The landing plan must support the ground tactical plan. This plan sequences elements into the area of operations to ensure platoons arrive at designated locations and times prepared to execute the ground tactical plan.

c. **Air Movement Plan**. The air movement plan is based on the ground tactical and landing plans. It specifies the schedule and provides instructions for air movement of soldiers, equipment, and supplies from pickup zones and landing zones.

d. **Loading Plan**. The loading plan is based on the movement plan. It ensures soldiers, equipment, and supplies are loaded on the correct aircraft. Platoon integrity is maintained when aircraft loads are planned. Cross loading may be necessary to ensure the survivability of platoon leadership and to ensure that the proper mix of weapons arrive at the LZ in a ready-to-fight configuration. The platoon leader or squad leader should always ensure the aircraft is loaded so dismounting infantrymen react promptly and contribute to mission accomplishment. If not directed by the commander, the platoon leader must develop a bump plan. A bump plan ensures essential soldiers and equipment are loaded ahead of less critical loads in case of aircraft breakdown or other problems.

e. **Staging Plan**. The staging plan is based on the loading plan and prescribes the arrival time of ground units (soldiers, equipment, and supplies) at the PZ in the order of movement. The staging plan includes the disposition of the vehicles left in the staging area and the platoon‘s linkup plan on return from the mission.

(1) ***Disposition of Vehicles.*** The platoon leader must develop a security plan in the staging area for the vehicles until the mission is completed and the platoon returns to the PZ. The security plan can be as simple as a coil or herringbone formation for the platoon, or the platoon may be part of a company modified perimeter defense. Instructions for link up of the platoon with its vehicles will also be included.

(2) ***Linkup of Vehicles.*** The platoon leader‘s linkup plan must be as detailed as the staging and loading plan. To simplify the linkup, the platoon leader must maintain platoon integrity as much as possible. The platoon leader or company commander should designate a linkup point for each unit to link up with their vehicles on landing. As the aircraft land, the units immediately move to their linkup point, mount their vehicles (if required), and prepare to continue the mission.

7-6. AREA SECURITY OPERATIONS

Area security operations protect specific critical and vulnerable assets or terrain from threat observation and direct fire. They can consist of escorting friendly convoys; protecting critical points such as bridges, command and control installations, or other key and vulnerable sites; or participating in protection of large areas such as airfields. During stability or support operations the platoon may be required to establish OPs, roadblocks or CPs. The platoon normally performs an area security operation when conventional security or combat operations would not work. The platoon may perform area security operations as part of a larger force or as an independent platoon mission. BFV platoons normally conduct area security missions to protect high-value points, areas, or assets. Whether and how much protection a point, area, or asset requires (and the defensive technique chosen) depends on the factors of METT-TC. The platoon leader must integrate his elements into the overall security plan for the area he must protect. Area security operations rely on various techniques, which may include reconnaissance, security, defensive tasks, and offensive tasks.

a. When deploying for area security, the platoon generally moves into a coil formation around the point, area, or asset they must secure. They orient vehicle positions

on likely enemy avenues of approach. If the platoon has engineer support, the engineers dig in the vehicle positions; if not, the vehicles occupy hasty fighting positions.

b. To further improve the position, the platoon employs hasty protective minefields, wire, and other obstacles, as appropriate and available. They emplace wire obstacles outside grenade range of friendly positions. Once they set up vehicle positions and obstacles, the platoon develops a fire plan and submits the plan to higher headquarters. This plan includes integrated direct and indirect fires.

c. In addition to setting up the platoon position around the asset to be secured, the platoon also employs patrols and OPs to enhance security (Figure 7-1). Reconnaissance patrols and combat patrols define the area of operations, gain information on enemy forces, and destroy small dismounted enemy reconnaissance elements. The platoon deploys OPs to observe likely avenues of approach, to provide early warning of enemy activity, and to aid in control of indirect fires.

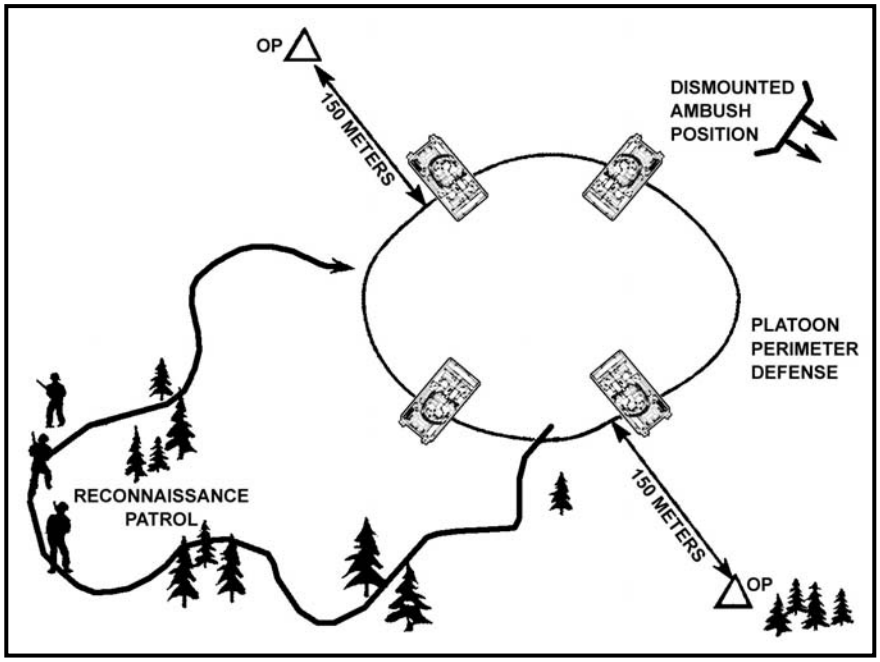

Figure 7-1. Platoon area security dispositions.

7-7. CONVOY AND ROUTE SECURITY

Company and larger organizations usually perform convoy or route security missions. Convoy security provides protection for a specific convoy. Route security aims at securing a specific route for a designated period of time, during which multiple convoys may use the route. These missions include numerous tasks (such as escort, reconnaissance, and combat reaction forces) that become missions for subordinate units. The size of the unit performing the convoy or route security operation depends on many factors including the size of the convoy, the terrain, and the length of the route.

a. **Route Reconnaissance.** In this mission, the platoon leader focuses on the route's trafficability and on enemy forces that might influence the route. The platoon must plan to call for engineer assets to aid in breaching point-type obstacles. Command-detonated devices pose a major threat during route reconnaissance.

b. **Convoy Escort.** The platoon may perform a convoy escort mission either independently or as part of a larger unit's convoy security mission. The convoy escort mission requires that the platoon provide the convoy with limited close-in protection from direct small arms fire. Platoon vehicles include military CSS and C2 vehicles and civilian trucks and buses. Leaders must carefully evaluate the threat before assigning a convoy escort mission to platoon-sized elements.

c. **Command and Control.** Because of the task organization of the convoy escort mission, command and control is especially critical. The relationship between the platoon and the convoy commander must provide unity of command and effort if combat operations are required during the course of the mission. In most cases, the BFV platoon will execute the escort mission under the control of the security force commander, who is usually under operational control (OPCON) or attached to the convoy commander. It is vital that the convoy commander issues a complete OPORD to all convoy vehicle commanders before executing the mission because the convoy may itself be task-organized from a variety of units, and some vehicles may not have tactical radios. The order should follow the standard five-paragraph OPORD format, but special emphasis should be placed on:

- Route of march (to include a strip map for each vehicle commander).
- Order of march.
- Actions at halts.
- Actions in case of vehicle breakdown.
- Actions on contact.
- Chain of command.
- Communications and signal information.

d. **Tactical Disposition.** During all escort missions, the convoy security commander and BFV platoon leader must establish and maintain security in all directions and throughout the platoon. As noted, several factors, including convoy size, affect this disposition. The key consideration is whether the platoon is operating as part of a larger escort force or is executing the escort mission independently. Additional METT-TC considerations include: the employment of BFVs by section and the employment of rifle squads during the mission (Length of convoy, terrain and the enemy will determine placement of sections and employment of rifle squads (fire teams riding in BFVs or in escorted vehicles). Maintain unit integrity in convoy vehicles at team or squad.

(1) ***Large-scale Escort Missions.*** When sufficient escort assets are available, the convoy commander will usually organize the convoy into three distinct elements: advance guard, close-in protective group, and rear guard. Figure 7-2, page 7-14, shows a convoy in which the BFV platoon is part of a company team-size escort force.

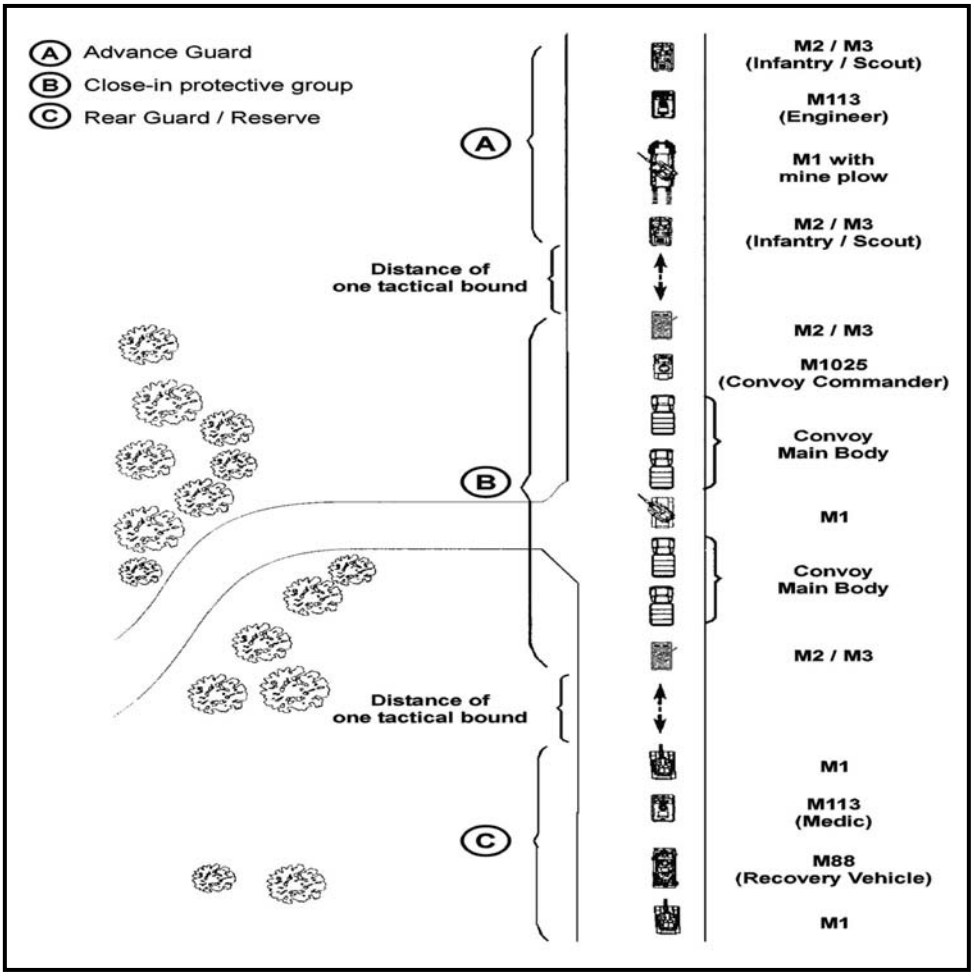

Figure 7-2. BFV platoon as part of larger escort force.

(a) The advance guard reconnoiters and proofs the convoy route. It searches for signs of enemy activity such as ambushes and obstacles. Within its capabilities, it attempts to clear the route, and it provides the convoy commander with early warning before the arrival of the vehicle column. In some cases, an individual BFV platoon vehicle, a section, or the entire platoon may be designated as part of the advanced guard and may receive a tank with a mine plow or mine roller.

(b) The BFV platoon normally will be tasked organized to operate within the close-in protective group. This group provides immediate, close-in protection for the vehicle column with escort vehicles positioned either in the column or on the flanks. The convoy commander's vehicle is located in this group.

(c) The rear guard follows the convoy. It provides security in the area behind the main body of the vehicle column, often moving medical and recovery assets. Again, an individual vehicle, a section, or the entire BFV platoon may be part of this element.

NOTE: The convoy commander may also designate the BFV or tank platoon as part of a reserve (reaction) force for additional firepower on enemy contact. The

reserve will either move with the convoy or be located at a staging area close enough to provide immediate interdiction against the enemy.

(2) ***Independent Convoy Escort.*** When the BFV platoon executes a convoy escort mission independently, the convoy commander and platoon leader disperse the BFVs throughout the convoy formation to provide forward, flank, and rear security. Whenever possible, wingman BFVs should maintain visual contact with their leaders. Engineer assets, if available, should be located near the front to respond to obstacles. At times, engineer assets may be required to move ahead of the convoy with scouts to proof the convoy route. Figure 7-3 illustrates this type of escort operation. In some independent escort missions, variations in terrain along the route may require the platoon to operate using a modified traveling overwatch technique. Figure 7-4 depicts such a situation. It shows one section leading the convoy while the other trails the convoy. Dispersion between vehicles in each section is sufficient to provide flank security. Depending on the terrain, the trail section may not be able to overwatch the movement of the lead section.

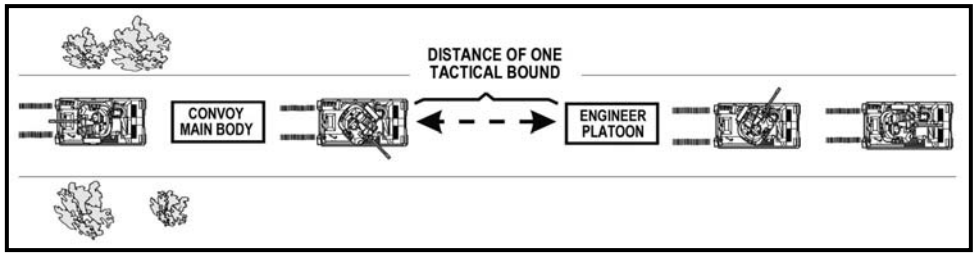

Figure 7-3. Platoon performing convoy escort independently.

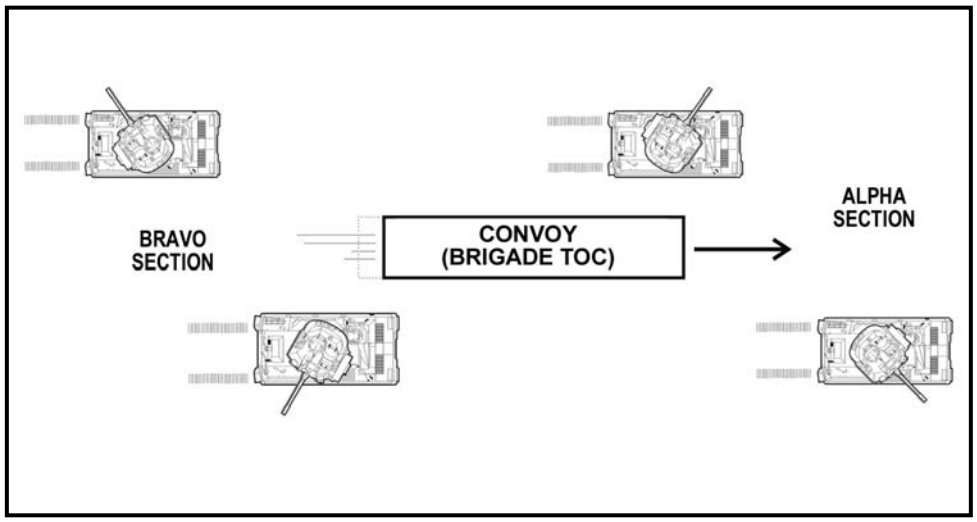

Figure 7-4. Platoon using modified traveling overwatch.

e. **Actions on Contact.** As the convoy moves to its new location, the enemy may attempt to harass or destroy it. This contact usually will usually occur in the form of an ambush, often with the use of a hastily prepared obstacle. The safety of the convoy rests on the speed and effectiveness with which escort elements can execute appropriate

actions on contact. Based on the factors of METT-TC, portions of the convoy security force, such as the BFV platoon or a BFV section, may be designated as a reaction force. The reaction force performs its escort duties, conducts tactical movement, or occupies an assembly area, as required, until enemy contact occurs and the convoy commander gives it a reaction mission.

f. **Actions at an Ambush.** An ambush is one of the more effective ways to interdict a convoy. Reaction to an ambush must be immediate, overwhelming, and decisive. Actions on contact must be planned for and rehearsed so they can be executed quickly.

(1) In almost all situations, the platoon will take several specific, instantaneous actions when it reacts to an ambush. These steps, illustrated in Figures 7-5 and 7-6, include:

- As soon as they acquire an enemy force, the escort vehicles take action toward the enemy (Figure 7-5). They seek covered positions between the convoy and the enemy and suppress the enemy with the highest volume of fire permitted by the ROE. Contact reports are submitted to higher headquarters as quickly as possible.
- The convoy commander retains control of the convoy vehicles and continues to move them along the route at the highest possible speed (Figure 7-5).
- Convoy vehicles, if armed, may return fire only if the escort has not positioned itself between the convoy and the enemy force.
- The platoon leader or the convoy commander may request that any damaged or disabled vehicles be abandoned and pushed off the route (Figure 7-6).
- The escort leader (in the example included here, this is the BFV platoon leader) uses spot reports (SPOTREPs) to keep the convoy security commander informed. If necessary, the escort leader or the convoy security commander can request support from the reaction force, call for, and adjust indirect fires.

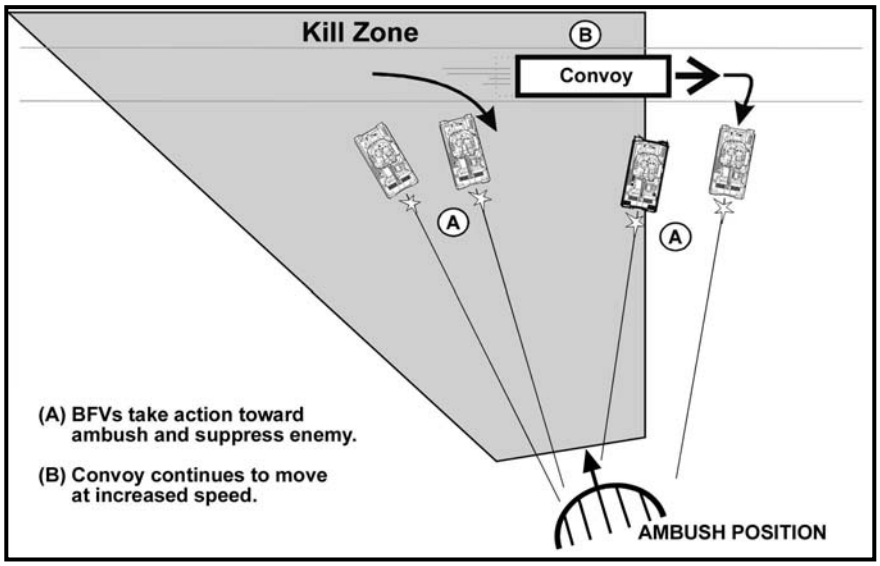

Figure 7-5. Convoy escort actions toward ambush.

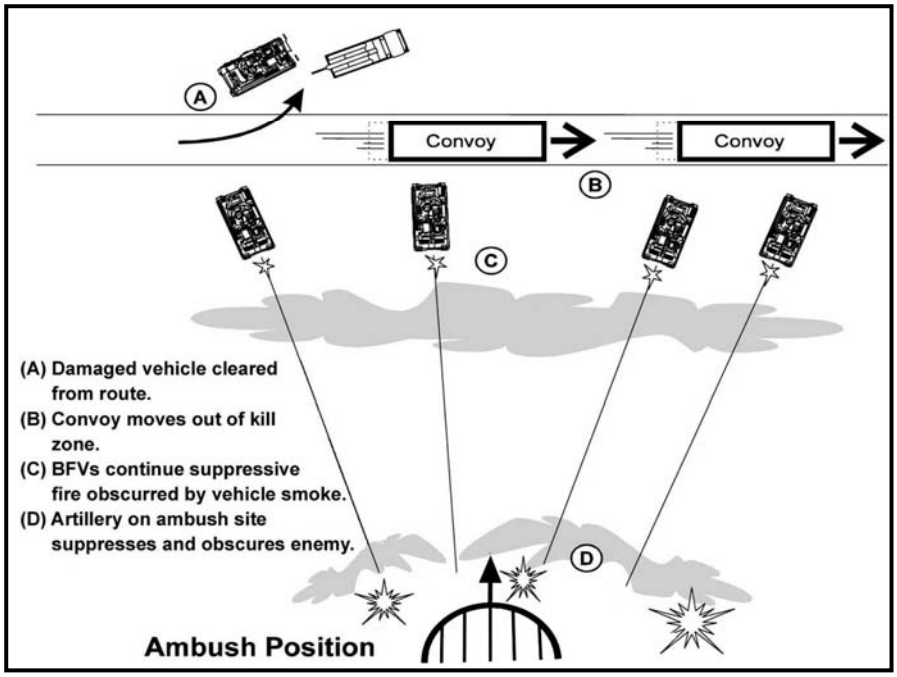

Figure 7-6. Convoy continues to move.

(2) Once the convoy is clear of the kill zone, the escort element executes one of the following courses of action:

- Continues to suppress the enemy as combat reaction forces move to support (Figure 7-7, page 7-18).
- Assaults the enemy (Figure 7-8, page 7-18).
- Breaks contact and moves out of the kill zone.

(3) In most situations, BFVs will continue to suppress the enemy or execute an assault. Contact should be broken only with the approval of the BFV platoon's higher commander.

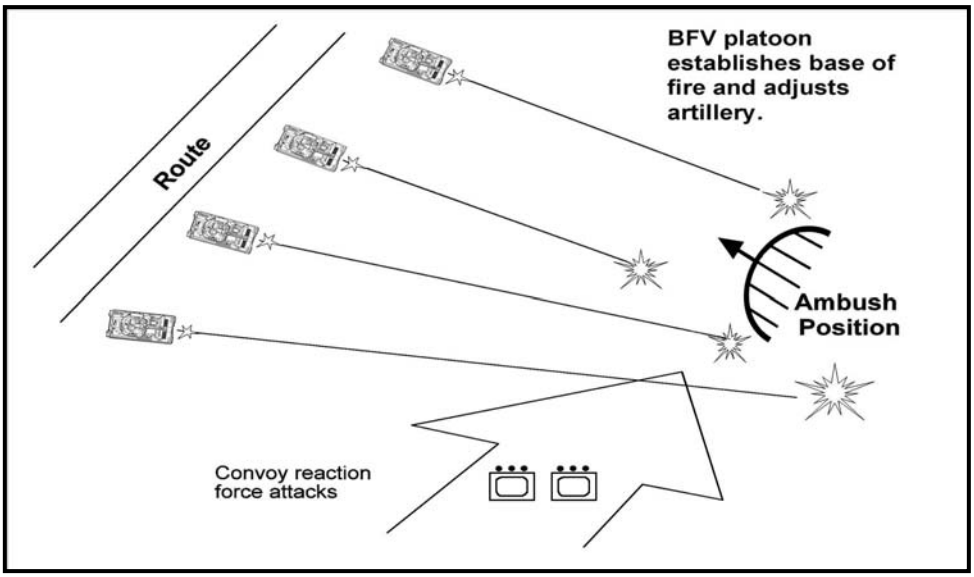

Figure 7-7. Escort suppresses ambush for reaction force attack.

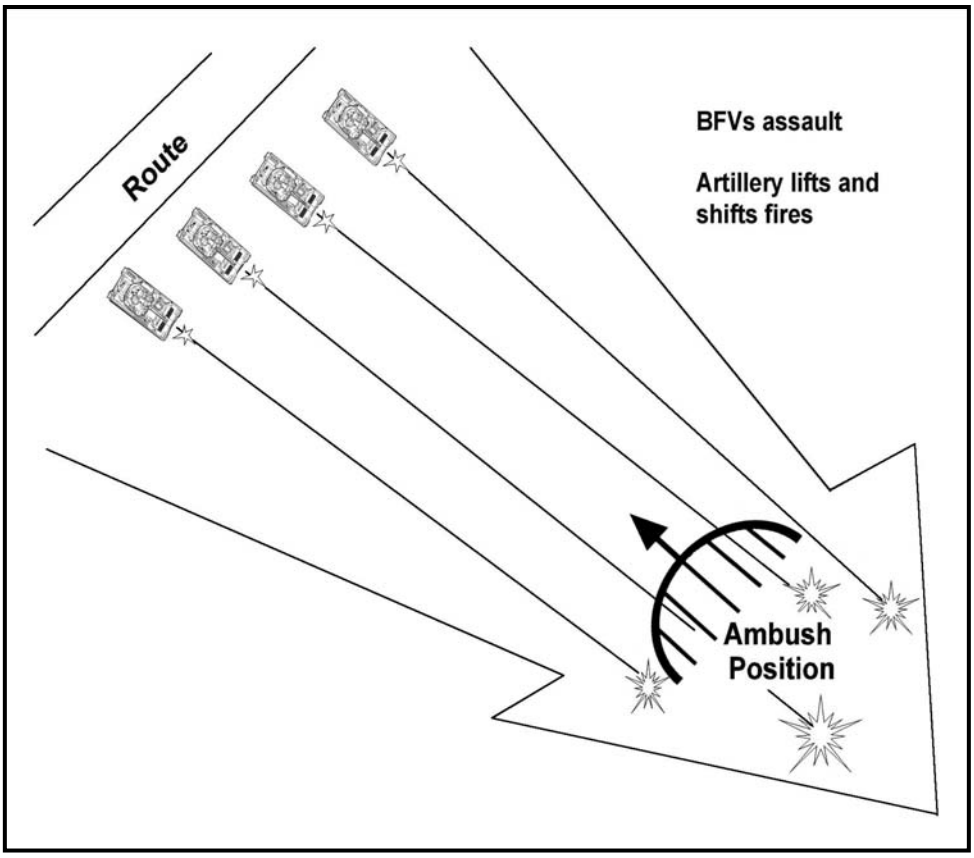

Figure 7-8. Escort assaults ambush.

g. **Actions at an Obstacle.** Obstacles are a major impediment to convoys. The purpose of reconnaissance ahead of a convoy is to identify obstacles and either breach them or find bypasses. In some cases the enemy or its obstacles may avoid detection by the reconnaissance element.

(1) Obstacles can be used to harass the convoy by delaying it. If the terrain is favorable, the obstacle may be able to stop the convoy all together. Obstacles may canalize or stop the convoy to set up an enemy ambush. When an obstacle is identified, the convoy escort faces two problems: reducing or bypassing the obstacle and maintaining protection for the convoy. Security becomes critical, and actions at the obstacle must be accomplished very quickly. The convoy commander must assume that the enemy is covering the obstacle with direct and indirect fire weapon systems.

(2) To reduce the time the convoy is halted and to reduce its vulnerability, the following actions should occur when the convoy escort encounters a point-type obstacle:

- The lead element identifies the obstacle and directs the convoy to make a short halt and establish security. The convoy escort overwatches the obstacle (Figure 7-9) and requests the breach element force to move forward.
- The convoy escort maintains 360-degree security of the convoy and provides overwatch as the breach force reconnoiters the obstacle in search of a bypass.

(3) Once all reconnaissance is complete, the convoy commander determines which of the following courses of action he will take.

- Bypass the obstacle.
- Breach the obstacle with assets on hand.
- Breach the obstacle with reinforcing assets.

(4) The convoy security commander relays a SPOTREP and requests support by combat reaction forces, engineer assets (if they are not part of the convoy), and aerial reconnaissance elements. Artillery units are alerted to prepare to provide fire support.

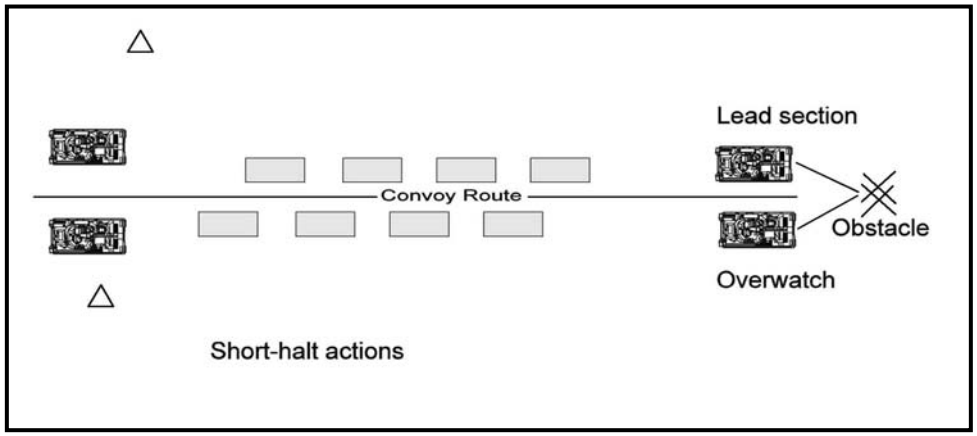

Figure 7-9. Convoy escort overwatches an obstacle.

h. **Actions During Halts.** During a short halt, the convoy escort remains alerted for possible enemy activity. If the halt is for any reason other than an obstacle, the following actions should be taken:

- The convoy commander signals the short halt and transmits the order via tactical radio. All vehicles in the convoy assume a herringbone formation.

- If possible, escort vehicles are positioned up to 100 meters beyond the convoy vehicles that are just clear of the route (Figure 7-10). Escort vehicles remain at the ready and establish local security.
- When the order is given to move out, convoy vehicles reestablish movement formation, leaving space for escort vehicles (Figure 7-11). Once the convoy is in column, local security elements (if used) return to their vehicles, and the escort vehicles rejoin the column (Figure 7-12).
- The convoy resumes movement.

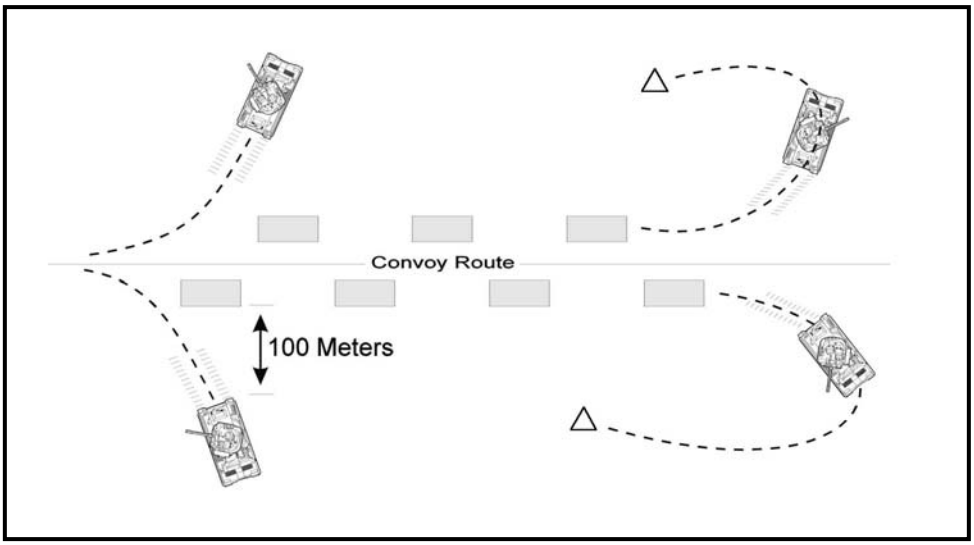

Figure 7-10. Convoy assumes herringbone formation.

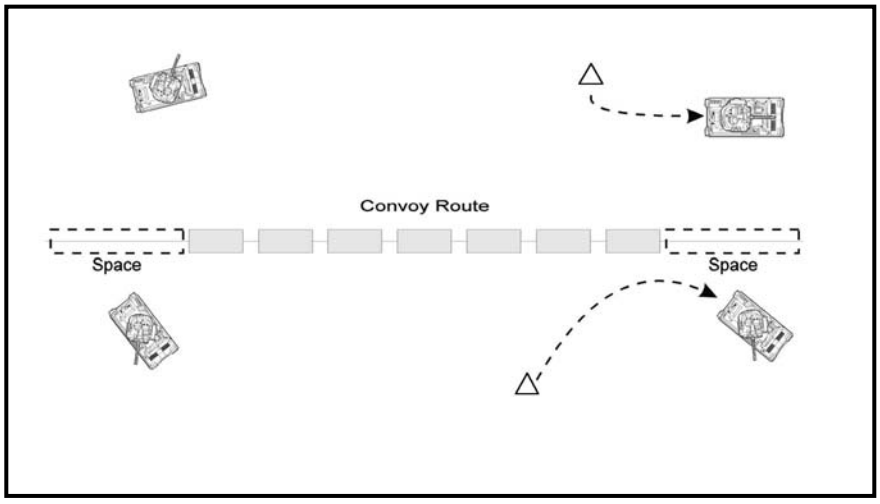

Figure 7-11. Convoy moves back into column formation.

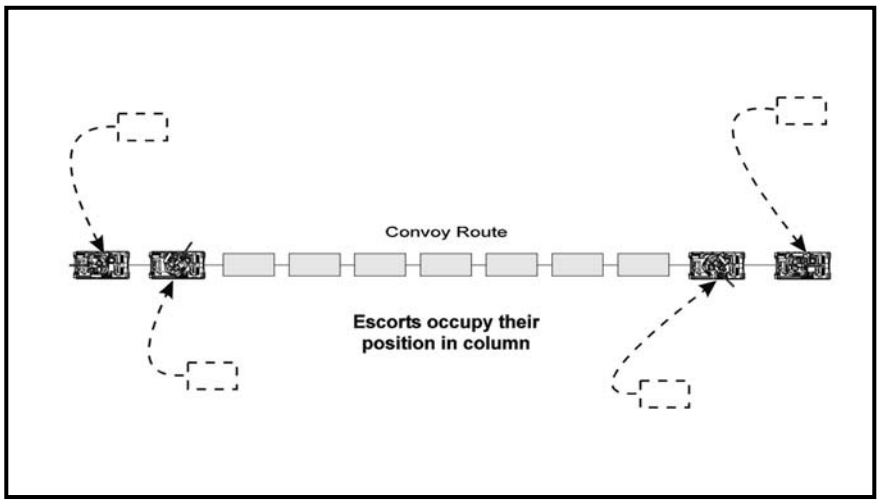

Figure 7-12. Convoy escort vehicles rejoin column.

7-8. CHECKPOINTS, ROADBLOCKS, AND OBSERVATION POSTS

Construction and manning of checkpoints, roadblocks, and observation points are high-frequency tasks for an infantry company and subordinate elements when they must establish area security during stability operations. (Figure 7-13, page 7-23, shows an example of a deliberate CP.)

- **Checkpoints.** A CP is a predetermined point used as a means of controlling movement such as a place where military police check vehicular or pedestrian traffic to enforce circulation control measures and other laws, orders, and regulations.
- **Roadblocks.** A roadblock is used to limit the movement of vehicles along a route or to close access to certain areas or roads. Checkpoints and roadblocks can be either deliberate or hasty with the primary difference being the extent of planning and preparation conducted by the establishing force.
- **Observation Posts.** An OP is a position from which military observations are made or fire directed and adjusted, and which has appropriate communications. They are both overt (conspicuously visible, unlike their tactical counterparts) and deliberately constructed. Observation posts are similar in construction to bunkers and are supported by fighting positions, barriers, and patrols.

a. **Purposes.** The platoon may be directed to establish a CP, roadblock, or OP for the following reasons.

- To show a military presence to all parties and to the population in the area.
- To survey all activity in the terrain, along roads, and in inhabited areas.
- To check and or inspect and register all personnel and vehicles in and out of the controlled area.
- To survey airspace, coastal areas, airfields, cease-fire lines, and borders.
- To deter illegal movement.
- To create an instant roadblock.
- To control movement into the area of operations or on a specific route.
- To prevent smuggling of contraband.

- To enforce the terms of peace agreements.
- To ensure proper use of routes by both civilian and military vehicles.

b. **Planning and Establishing**. The layout, construction, and manning of CPs, roadblocks, and OPs should reflect the factors of METT-TC, especially the time available for emplacing them. The layout of a deliberate CP can be found in FM 71-1. The following procedures and considerations may apply:

- Position the CP or roadblock where it is visible and where traffic cannot turn back, get off the road, or bypass without being observed.
- Position a combat vehicle off the road, but within sight, to deter resistance to soldiers manning the CP. The vehicle should be in a hull-down position and protected by local security. It must be able to engage vehicles attempting to break through or bypass the CP.
- Place obstacles in the road to slow or canalize traffic into the search area.
- Establish a reserve.
- Establish wire communications in the CP area to connect the CP bunker, the combat vehicle, the search area, security forces, the rest area, and any other elements involved in the operation.
- Designate the search area. If possible, it should be below ground to provide protection against such incidents as the explosion of a booby-trapped vehicle. Establish a parking area adjacent to the search area.
- If applicable, CP personnel should include linguists.
- Establish an early warning system around the perimeter of the OP (trip flares, empty cans, dry branches, and so on).
- Prepare shelters and defensive positions.

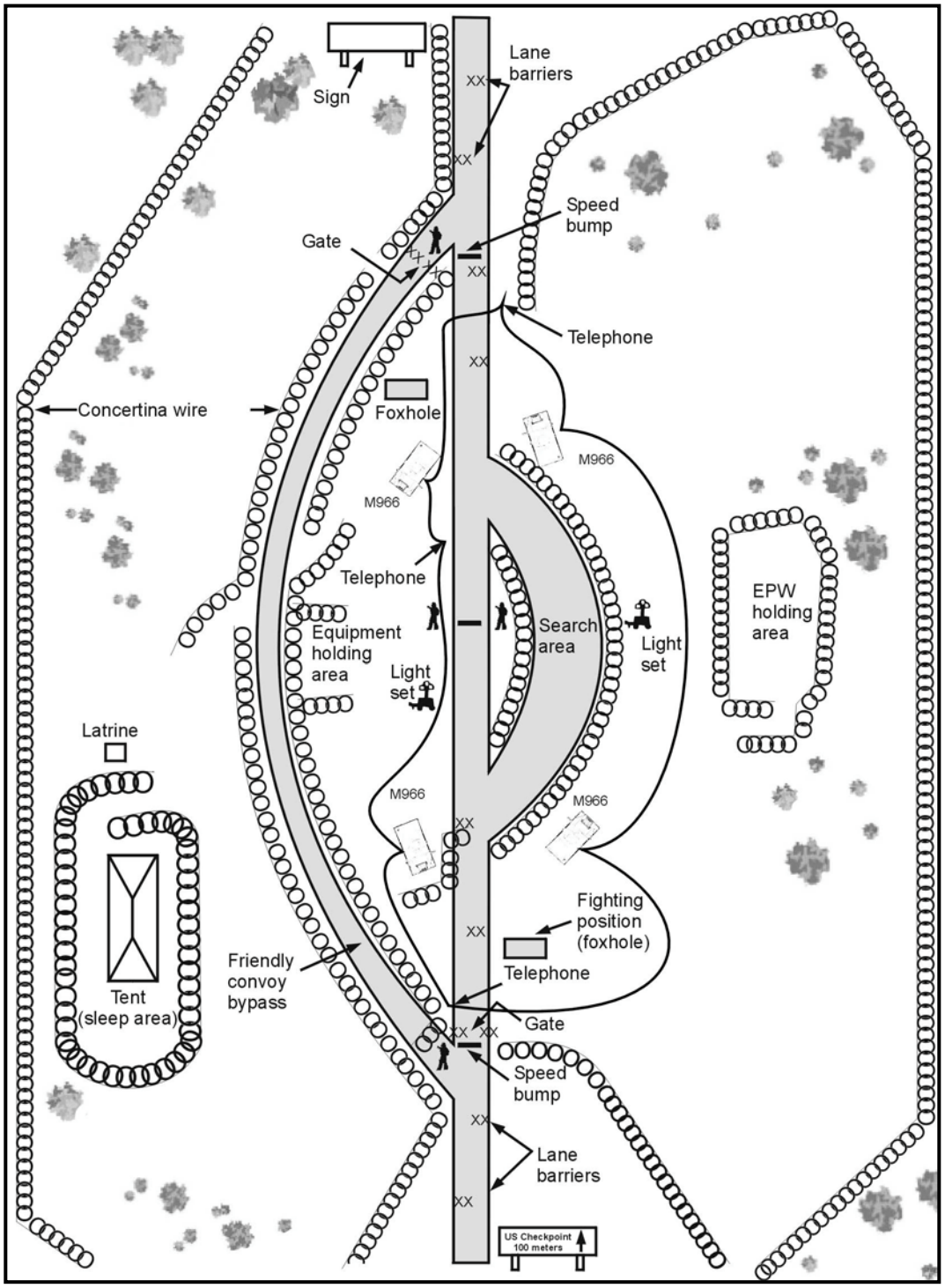

Figure 7-13. Example of a deliberate CP.

c. **Manning Observation Posts and Checkpoints.** When manning OPs and CPs proper order and a systematic approach must be emphasized. Personnel must behave so that no misunderstanding occurs. The personnel manning the CP must be in complete control of the surrounding terrain.

(1) Although the OP is usually manned on a 24-hour basis, it may be manned only by day or night. During darkness, at least two persons must be in the OP position-one observes while the other is resting. In remote areas, or if the situation in the area is tense, more personnel man the OP for security and observation.

(2) A minimum of two soldiers should man the CP depending on traffic and the general situation. One soldier examines people and vehicles and the other soldier covers the area where people and vehicles are checked. The soldier covering the other area is armed and has easy access to radio and telephone. If more soldiers are manning the CP, one of them should be ready to set up obstacles to stop vehicles trying to force their way through the CP.

d. **Communications.** All OPs and CPs are connected to their unit or directly to the battalion operations center by radio and telephone. A spare radio and batteries should be supplied to the OP and CP, especially to remote OPs located in dangerous areas. Radio and telephone checks are carried out at least twice every 24 hours (three times is recommended). Special code words must be prepared for use in certain situations. Conversation must be coded. Reserve frequencies must be available. OPs and CPs of great operational value may be connected by direct landline to ensure rapid coordination in urgent situations.

e. **Equipment.** Many items are used to reinforce a roadblock, CP, or OP.

(1) Some of the recommended equipment includes:

- Barrels filled with sand, water, or heavy concrete blocks (emplaced to slow and canalize vehicles).
- Concertina wire (emplaced to control movement around the CP).
- Secure facilities for radio and wire communications with the controlling headquarters.
- First aid kit or a medic if available.
- Sandbags for defensive positions.
- Bunker construction material..
- Binoculars, night vision devices, and or flashlights.
- Long-handled mirrors (used to inspect vehicle undercarriages).
- Signs stating the speed limit into and out of the CP. (The text of these signs must be written in English and the local language.)

(2) Elements manning a deliberate CP may require access to specialized equipment such as:

- Floodlights.
- Duty log.
- Flag and unit sign.
- Barrier pole that can be raised and lowered.
- Generators with electric wire.

f. **Control.** During periods in which the civilian administration is not functioning, refugees will be routinely traveling throughout the area. All soldiers participating in these operations must fully understand the procedures for appropriately identifying personnel and for controlling personnel and vehicles moving through their AO.

(1) ***Personnel Identification.*** People who have permission to enter a sector are regulated by special instructions to the patrol conducting the operation. Often local and civilian employees, mayors, and chiefs of tribes in villages in the AO are given special

identification (ID) cards and may pass without being checked. These special ID cards must be registered. The primary reasons for checking people will be for identification and to prevent illegal items being brought into the AO through the CP. Personnel must identify themselves with an ID card, passport, and so on. Such ID cards are written in the local language. Examples of different ID cards must be kept in the CP.

(2) ***Personnel Control***. Personnel control is conducted in different ways. Personnel should watch for people acting strangely or with bulging clothing. If there is a danger of car bombs, special attention should be paid to cars containing only one person. When conducting body searches, personnel should feel along clothes and not just pat them. Special attention must be paid to the lower parts of the back and from the shoes up to the knees. Armpits also must be checked. The wide trousers used by some cultures should be carefully examined. Personnel should also check boots and hats.

(3) ***Checking Women and Clerical Personnel.*** Making a body search of women and clerical personnel is often difficult in Moslem countries, and may lead to strong reactions. The commander must thoroughly discuss this with mayors and other leaders, and the procedure used must be consistent with agreements and treaties. Usually women are only checked with a metal detector. Elderly women often may remain in the vehicle during inspection of a car. If there is a suspicion that the "rules" are being misused, then other and better checks must be made. The battalion commander makes these decisions.